GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:311
ANSWERED ON:05.08.2002
MICROBIAL RENNET FOR CHEESE MAKING
S. SAIDUZZAMAN

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a patent had been taken out at NDRI, Karnal for a microbial rennet for cheese making;

(b) whether due to lack of follow-up action the patent was not fully utilized or developed;

(c) if so, whether the Government are aware that Japanese are selling in India microbial rennet since there is a ban in their country on use of animal rennet for cheese making;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e) the corrective steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 311 TO BE ANSWERED O AUGUST, 2002 REGARDING MICROBIAL RENNET FOR CHEESE MAKING.

(a) Yes, Sir. An Indian Patent No. 96317 was granted to NDRI, Karnal on 15.2.1967 for `Process for producing bacterial rennet like enzyme`. The term of this Patent has expired.

(b) No, Sir. Extensive follow up action was taken by the NDRI by approaching the pharmaceutical companies in the country as well as commercial houses engaged in enzyme production. However, this technology was not commercially used due to very low demand of microbial rennet in the country and very high investment in this venture.

(c) Yes, Sir. Microbial rennet from Japan and other countries is presently being used for cheese production.

(d) The enzyme used (Trade Name) for cheese making in India are: Meito from Japan, Fromase from the Netherlands, Modilase and Hannilase from USA and Maxiren from France.

Because dairying industry in India has standardized the process of cheese production with these microbial rennets, their import from Japan and other countries is done.

(e) Studies are being done at NDRI using microbial rennets prepared for curing and quality attributes of cheese. Research efforts are made to produce recombinant chymosin.

As per the Patents Act, 1970 only process patents were granted. The recent Patents (Amendment) Act, 2002, has provision for protection of microorganisms. This enforcement will take place in due course as per the Government of India Gazette Notification from time to time.